

Proposed Minutes
Child Services Oversight Committee
January 5, 2015, 1:00pm
Indiana State House, Senate Chamber

Members present: Senator Carlin Yoder; Doris Tolliver, Chief of Staff, Department of Child Services (in place of Mary Beth Bonaventura, Director, Department of Child Services); Leslie Dunn, Indiana CASA Director, Division of State Court Administration, Indiana Supreme Court; Sean McCrindle, Vice President of Program Operations, Bashor Children's Home; Suzanna O'Malley, Prosecuting Attorney Council; Representative Gail Riecken; Jolene Bracale, Program Coordinator for Student Health, Department of Education; Larry Landis, Executive Director, Indiana Public Defender Council; Senator John Broden; Honorable Christopher Burnham, Morgan Superior Court 2

Members absent: Representative Kevin Mahan.

Guest Presenters: Alfreda Singleton-Smith, Ombudsman Bureau; Parvonay Stover, Director of Legislative Affairs; Judge Burnham, Morgan Superior Court 2

Commission Staff present: Dalton Thieneman, State Senate.

1. **Welcome.** Sen. Yoder welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone to turn on their microphones because it's being streamed live.
The floor was then opened for introductions.
2. **Approval of September 9, 2014 minutes.** Sen. Yoder asked the committee for their vote of approval for the May 8, 2014 minutes. The committee members unanimously voted to approve the minutes.
3. **Overview of Ombudsman Report.** Alfreda Singleton-Smith
Ms. Singleton-Smith presented an overview of the DCS Ombudsman Bureau outlining the Assessment process. The DCS Ombudsman periodically reviews relevant policies and procedures with a view toward the safety and welfare of children. The Ombudsman may also recommend changes in procedures for investigating reports of abuse and neglect. The DCS Family Case Manager responsible for the initial Assessment of abuse or neglect allegations is expected to inform the family of the allegations while simultaneously engaging them, conducting interviews, acquiring enough information to accurately assess safety, evaluating risk, selecting the appropriate level of intervention, coordinating with appropriate partners, and determining findings. The term Assessment implies to an in-depth analysis of the family dynamics resulting in problem identification and corresponding resolutions to eliminate risk.

DCS completed 115,474 Assessments during SFY2010. Of this number 13,005 involved sex abuse allegations, 15,579 involved physical abuse allegations and 86,890 involved neglect allegations. Approximately 28.6% of the sex abuse allegations, 15.7% of the physical abuse allegations and 19.4% of the neglect allegations were substantiated. (Source DCS Victims of Abuse and Neglect, July 2002 to June 2012, ODM) Unsubstantiated Assessments are closed upon completion and may involve a referral to Community Partners, a voluntary service. Substantiated Assessments generate a range of responses. The Assessment FCM is required to complete a thorough Assessment on each one of these reports within 30 days. A thorough Assessment per policy includes but is not limited to preparing for the Assessment, conducting the required interviews, gathering collateral information, assessing home conditions, examining the child, assessing safety and risk, staffing and/or teaming the Assessment, determining findings, providing due process information, completing all required written documentation and submitting the written report. Within each one of these areas of responsibilities are subcategories with corresponding requirements. Fatality and near-fatality Assessments have additional requirements and are not subject to the 30 day time limit. If a Child In Need of Services (CHINS) petition is filed the Assessment FCM has additional Court and placement responsibilities until the case can be transferred to the ongoing worker, if applicable.

Assessment is a critical function of DCS, not only because of the daunting responsibility of protecting children, but because the initial Assessment determines the subsequent intervention. Interest was generated in reviewing the Assessment process after Ombudsman observations of the wide range in the depth of practice in the Assessment process, media coverage referencing DCS Assessments, and the Commission recommendation to adopt a Differential Response System. Since 2005 several systemic changes including reduced caseloads, practice reform, a comprehensive training program and a quality improvement program provided unprecedented opportunities for best practice to be implemented in the Assessment process. Additional areas needing improvement will continue to be identified in the quality review process, indicating a likelihood that resolutions may already be in progress for some of the issues identified in this report.

4. Overview of DCS Quality Review Process. Parvonay Stover, DCS Legislative Director

The Indiana Department of Child Services Quality Service Review will use a review method and practice appraisal process to assess how child and their families are benefitting from services received and how well locally coordinated services are working for children and families. The central purpose of the review process is to encourage and support a successful change for families leading to adequate, sustained daily functioning, safety, permanency and well-being. The practice should be strength-based, outcome-focused and results-driven. The review is an evidence-based method to evaluate results in a specific service area at a given point in time for the status of the child, status of the parent/caregiver and status of system performance based on evaluation of key practice indicator skills.

The review of each child and family served is an evaluation of the service system. A random sample of children's cases are reviewed to determine child and parent/caregiver status, recent process, related system practice and performance results. A review will be conducted in each region approximately every 18 months and will include the participation of all DCS local offices within the region. All reviews will be scheduled by the Performance and Quality Improvement team of the Services and Outcomes Division. A separate sample of Collaborative Care cases will be selected to be reviewed at the time of the Regional QSR. The number of cases reviewed in each region will be determined by the number of Collaborative Care cases open in the region at the time of the case selection. These cases will be reviewed utilizing the evidence-based QSR protocol. The Quality Service Review examines outcomes for a focus child and his/her parents/caregivers while assessing the service system surrounding the family. Case review findings are used internally in an effort to improve practice skills. Externally, the QSR strives to stimulate and support skills needed to improve services for children and families who are recipients of the local community's service providers. The service areas include, but are not limited to the following: QSR Results 1. Child Welfare; 2. Health; 3. Mental Health; 4. Education; and 5. Juvenile Justice.

5. Discussion of Family Case Manager Turnover. Judge Burnham

The turnover and lack of experience of the FCM's, combined with their current caseloads, is troubling. Our CASA volunteers are often required to familiarize the new FCM with case history; no real transfer of knowledge from old to new FCM. Our CASA volunteers are asked to take the lead of team meetings, and provide case updates to foster parents or children - not their responsibility by law/regulations. Our local Director moved to Kokomo, and is allegedly rarely in the office here. Five or six years ago, case plans were routinely filed with the court within the 45-60 day post-dispositional requirement; for several years there were no records of case plans being filed with the court; after a request was made for copies of the case plans for CASA volunteers, around 70 were received, none of them appeared to have been previously filed with the court; CASA cannot function without a shared case plan goal.

Is it time to legislative remove "status offenders (i.e. runaway, incorrigible, chronic truants, curfew violators) completely out of the Delinquency code, and move them into the CHINS code. IDOC is (reportedly) seeking to legislatively ban placement of any of these "status offenders" in juvenile facilities of the IDOC. Courts have very few resources now to effectively rehabilitate these kids within the parameters of the delinquency code.

6. Future Meeting Topics.

- a. Outcome Measures Project, IARCA

7. Future Meeting Dates.

- a. "Thank you to all in attendance for your time and efforts for our Indiana youth. Our next meeting will focus on the Outcome Measures Project and a Legislative Update from DCS. Our

next meeting will be schedule by the committee's schedule around mid-June." –Chairman Yoder